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what difference does it make if we are to have a big navy, whether we get it before the people become frightened, as Mr. Roosevelt would do, or build it slowly, without scaring them, as Mr. Long desires?

The whole theory that our nation ought to increase its navy in proportion to its growth seems to us to be based upon entirely untenable premises. It assumes that the barbaric and unfriendly international relations of the past still continue, and are to continue for the future, that civilization is making no progress. It assumes that the sea is the same dangerous place for commerce that it was three-quarters of a century ago. It further assumes that certain foreign nations are constantly possessed of a malignant wish to humiliate us, to despoil us, and to beat us out of our proper sphere, and that they are more likely to do this now than in the days when we were small and relatively weak.

A little thought must convince any one that the exact opposites are true. Piracy has gone from the seas. Commerce is safe—if it behaves itself—almost absolutely safe, in every quarter of the world. The relations of the nations are improving and becoming more friendly with extraordinary rapidity. Civilization is relegating force more and more into the background everywhere in common life. There is not a particle of proof that any foreign government has any evil designs upon us or upon our proper sphere. If they had, the folly of crossing the seas thousands of miles to attack us in our impregnable position, with a population much greater than that of any other of the first-class powers except Russia, would appear to them so great as to keep them in their own ports.

The whole present state of civilization and our country's position and part in it argue strongly for a less rather than for a greater American navy. If we had the courage to stop where we are, or to lead in moderate reduction, the other governments would be inspired by the noble example, and either singly or jointly would quickly find some way of following it.

Rumors of Peace.

Rumors of negotiations with a view to end the war in the East have been unusually rife during the closing days of March. On the 30th came an announcement of information from "unimpeachable sources" that Russia and Japan had chosen President Roosevelt as mediator. The day before it was the French Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, whom the Czar had charged with the duty of learning from the Mikado's government what peace terms would be acceptable. Connected with these announcements was the further one that the Russian advisory council of war had counseled the Czar that it was hopeless to continue the struggle.

All these rumors have been, as we go to press,

categorically denied by both governments. The Russian government says that it has authorized no one to ask Japan for terms of peace. Baron Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador in London, declares that his country will enter upon no negotiations except directly with Russia, and that Japan is giving her attention to the military operations in Manchuria, and not to peace *pourparlers*.

The situation looks, therefore, as if the war were to go on indefinitely. The Japanese army is again in motion, following the retreating Russian forces northward toward Harbin. If General Linevitch finds himself sufficiently reinforced to make a stand, we may expect in a short time another deadly engagement, with a repetition of the awful holocausts of Moukden and Liaoyang. The hour and power of darkness are still to continue in that war-cursed region, no one knows how long.

It is not easy to determine what has been the basis of these strong, persistent peace rumors. They have been doubtless in part produced by the earnest efforts which are known to have been made by King Edward, Foreign Minister Delcassé, Secretary Hay and others, to induce the belligerents to accept mediation and to carry the sanguinary struggle no further. The general demand on the part of the civilized world for a cessation of the war has also operated to multiply and extend the rumors of peace negotiations. The press has been quick to respond to these influences, and the great dailies are each as eager now to report the first word of peace as they were in the beginning to sound the first note of war.

The civilized world wants the war to end, there is no doubt of that. It is tired and sick of reading of the atrocious butcheries of men, many of whom have been dragged unwillingly into the conflict, and whose lives have no value to the governments except as so many pieces in the fighting machine. It is outraged in conscience at the gross inhumanity and folly of the spectacle. But this outraged cry over the dreadful scene is for the present as powerless as a baby's clenched hand. War is war, and when it is once going it cannot be cried or wept or deplored to a standstill. It rages on according to its own law until it fights itself out, and at least one of the parties is beaten into helplessness, like a slugger collapsed and limp on the floor of the ring.

The time to arrest such a war as that now going on is before it commences. And that is the business to which civilized society should hereafter diligently give itself—to prevent any such scene from ever again disgracing the earth. It is a credit to men's hearts passionately to desire to put an end to such shocking deeds as those which for the past year have marked the Eastern conflict; it would be much more creditable to their heads if they put forth the same amount of spiritual energy in making such things impossible for the future.